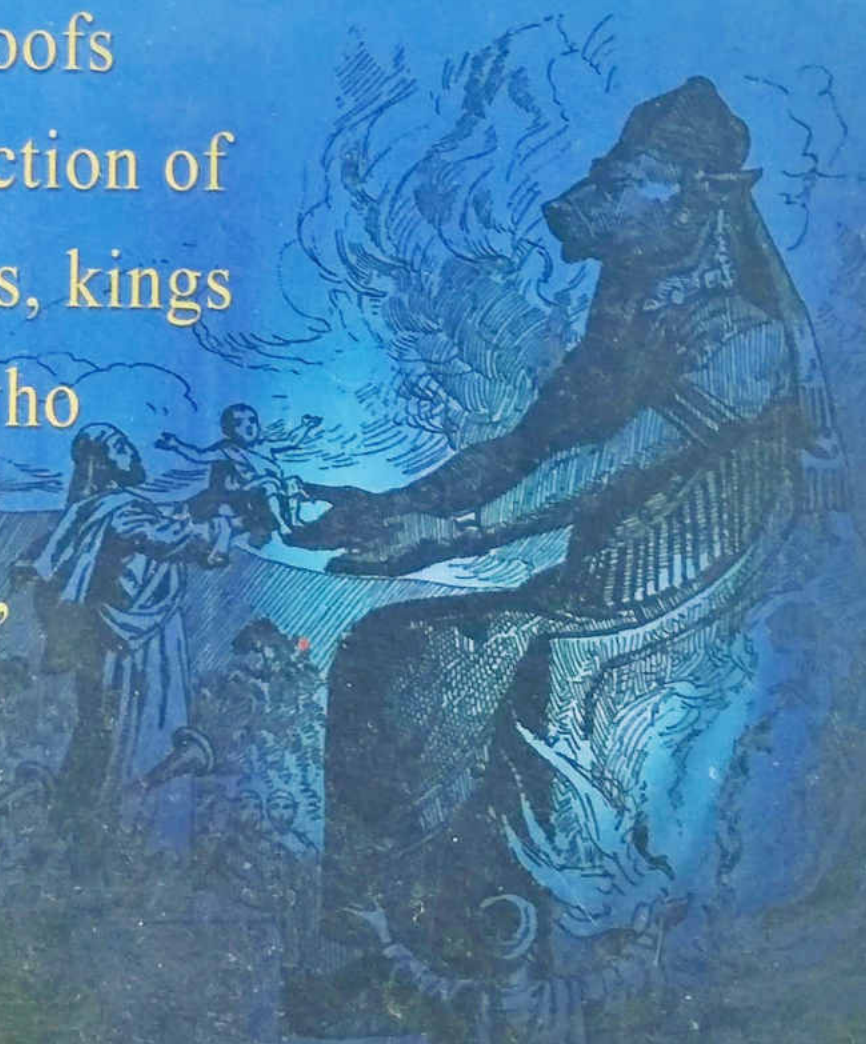




IDOL WORSHIP CAUSED DISINTEGRATION

BY
Evan. Dr. S. Thayappan.

“Historical proofs
of the destruction of
nations, cities, kings
and people who
practised
idol worship”



*“you shall not make for yourself a carved image...
...you shall not bow down to them nor serve them...”
(Ex 20:4,5)*

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(Ex 20:4,5)**

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Introduction

I have already published a three-part series entitled 'Fulfilled Prophecies' explaining how the Lord fulfilled every word He had prophesied through His prophets. As I began writing this book, I was so horrified that my whole being began to shake and I remained appalled beyond words.

The reason was, many nations which were advanced in civilization, religions and cultural traditions and were very prosperous, met with total annihilation. Similar was the fate of emperors, kings and their people. Cities were burned down and ravaged. People—even women and children—were mercilessly put to the sword. Thousands of young men were taken captive to other countries and sold like cattle. They were made to work very hard day and night to build cities and forts. The wealth the people had saved was pillaged and looted. As I was writing about them, I was shocked to find the immeasurable wrath of God and the most severe punishment He gave to the people whom He loved.

I wondered what could be the reason for God to give up His people into the hands of their enemies to be tortured. I knew it was their sin of idol worship which He detested and their practice of serving other gods forgetting the Creator which infuriated Him.

Our own country India is steeped in idol worship. There is a proliferation of idols and we find them in every nook and corner. Through the media we come to know the adversities, afflictions, anguish and distress our country is experiencing.

Floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, sudden storms, monsoon failure, climate change and its harmful effects,

murder, robbery, adultery, rape, (raping even small children), accidents, terrorism, violence, fishermen being attacked and their boats and nets being seized, their confinement in prison, attacks by Maoists and Naxalites, bribery, corruption in administration, differences in caste and religion which lead to social disturbances—what is the reason for the afflictions and losses which come our way?

Forgetting the formless and invisible God, we have created statues which take shape in our imagination. We have built temples for them. We have grand celebrations as we worship the idols we have set up. Will it not infuriate our God? Compared with the way the ancient nations which took to idol worship met with untold sufferings and were ultimately destroyed, what is happening in our country now is nothing at all. Our LORD is observing everything with extreme patience. He expects us to repent of our evil ways. We can escape the wrath of God if we return to Him and be steadfast in our relationship with Him.

Many people and many groups may not like the way I write, but it is not my intention to wound anyone's feelings, nor is religious conversion my focus of attention. Caste and religion are man's creation, not God's. What we should aim at is a life of joy, peace, righteousness, truth and justice. We should become the subjects of the eternal Kingdom of God.

It is my desire that we should not become the objects of God's wrath. May God speak to everyone who reads this book which is written based on historical evidences.

May God's grace uphold you,

Your loving brother,

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IDOL WORSHIP

CAUSED DISINTEGRATION



1. Mesopotamia fell into ruins

The nation known as Mesopotamia was first called the land of the Chaldeans, later known as Babylonia and at present exists as Iraq. It was known for its civilization, architecture, sculpture and richness. Later, the people began to worship idols which the Lord hated and because of it, Saddam Hussein was murdered pathetically. Today, the nation is witnessing bombings, suicide bombing and gunshots everyday, as a result of which hundreds of people are dying. In addition to people living in fear of sudden bombing, there is also a scarcity of essential things and life-saving medicines because the United Nations has imposed economic sanction on Iraq.

The people of Israel were subjected to torture

God chose the people of Israel specially for Himself. Abraham a godly man and their forefather was separated from his people living in the land of the Chaldeans and God blessed him and his descendants. God said, "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth" (Genesis 13:16); and, "... count the stars if you are able to number them... so shall your descendants be" (Genesis 15:5). So saying He blessed him. The people who were blessed by God began to indulge in idol worship which God detested. He let them suffer

as slaves in Egypt for 400 years. There was no limit to the sufferings they experienced in Egypt.

Idol worship will bring sufferings to you

After King Solomon's reign the nation of Israel was divided into two in 933 B.C. The northern region consisting of 10 tribes was known as 'Israel' and the southern part belonging to Judah was called Judea. Till 721 B.C. 19 kings ruled over Israel, and not only did the kings worship idols, they made the people also follow idol worship, and thereby did evil in the eyes of the Lord. Therefore, the Lord gave them into the hands of the Assyrians.

The two captivities prophesied by Moses

In Deuteronomy 28:36,37 (1451 B.C.), Moses prophesied that because the people served strange gods without heeding the words spoken by God, twice during different periods they would be punished by being driven out of their land. V.36: **"The LORD will bring you and the king whom you have set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods—wood and stone. V.37: "And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the LORD will drive you."**

What Moses prophesied was fulfilled in 721 B.C. (after 730 years) when the people were taken captive to Assyria. Again it was fulfilled in 586 B.C. (after 865 years) when they were taken captive to Babylon. The Assyrian king Salmaneser dragged Hoshea the last king of Israel and imprisoned him in

721 B.C. He took 27, 290 of the leaders and lords as prisoners and slaves to Assyria (II Kings 17:6) and settled them in Halah and Habor and the cities of the Medes.

When Zedekiah was king over Judea the southern region, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded Judea three times, plundered the cities and the Temple and took many people captive. Eventually, he killed the sons of Zedekiah right before his eyes, then put out his eyes and took him captive along with others (II Kings 25:7).

In this way, every letter of what Moses had foretold in Deut.28:36 in 1451 B.C. was fulfilled. Moses' second prophecy in Deut.28:64-66 also came true. V.64: **"Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone. V.65: "And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. V.66: "Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life."**

The second prophecy of Moses began to be fulfilled in 70 A.D. during the Roman regime. From 70 A.D. to 1948 (till Israel was declared an independent nation), for 1878 years God punished the people. They were scattered all over the world, tortured, shattered and murdered. They lost their homes, property, their children and land and lived like orphans having

nothing they could call their own. God made them suffer such afflictions as no other nation ever suffered.

Will God spare those who tortured and nailed to the cross the holy One who took the form of man to redeem sinners? It was God's will that Jesus should be offered as a sacrifice, and everything happened according to the divine plan foretold centuries earlier that He would die and rise again. Yet, the Jews who were responsible for Christ's death had to pay a heavy price for it. The punishment they had to receive could not be light.

In a similar manner, if the people who worship the only true God or the pastors or servants of God are made to suffer or if the places of worship are attacked, will God be indifferent to it? If people deny the true God, His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit who form the Trinity, and begin to worship idols which have taken shape in man's imagination instead of the One who ought to be worshipped, what will happen? We are going to see what happened to those who did it and those who instigated them to do it. Whether they are political parties or religious groups or the government or a government official, we are going to see with historical evidence what happened to them. If they repent after reading about them, it will be good for them, their descendants and our nation.

2. Judah was of no avail—God's anger

Twenty kings ruled over the kingdom of Judah between 933 and 586 B.C. Of them nine kings made the people worship idols and did evil in the eyes of the Lord. The Lord sent many

prophets and warned them, (Please read Leviticus 26:21-33 and Deuteronomy 28:68—1491-1450), but His warning had no effect on them. Whatever God asked them not to do, they did. Idol worship, serving strange gods, sinful life, sinful thoughts, fornication, adultery, violence, lying, treason, speaking ill of others—they continued to do them. Fear of God should refine a man and make him holy. It must deliver him from sinful thoughts and sinful habits and deeds. That is true godliness. Do the gods we worship deserve to be called true God?

The gods we worship should be examples to us; they should not only teach us the way we should follow, they should also follow the way themselves. Our Vedas tell us clearly about the godly characteristics of our God. Even Thiruvalluvar has spoken of them. I have written about them in my books, 'Who is the true God?' and 'The Truth the Siththars have found'. We should examine the characteristics of the gods we worship and find out if they are godly characteristics or not. What is the use of our education, knowledge and wisdom? Are they meant merely for getting a job? Should we blindly follow what our parents and forefathers had done in their ignorance? God has given us the sixth sense only to analyse and judge our actions. We must use it for the right purpose, and if we do not, we shall be the losers.

Our life in this world will last only for 70 or 80 years. After that we have an eternal life. Where are we going to spend it—in heaven or hell? We educate our children so that they can have a good future. We teach them even when they

are young what they should do and should not do. We build a house, amass wealth and property for them. We save money for them in the bank and insure their lives against risks. To buy a phone, a sari and an essential commodity we visit many shops and examine their quality and price very carefully. But, do we ever think where our children and grandchildren are going to spend their eternity?

Should we not consider if the god we worship will ever take us to heaven? Is it an intelligent way to follow blindly what our forefathers had been practising? Should we not use our intelligence and find out what is the best way?

Just because our parents are Hindus, we are also Hindus. If they are Christians we shall also be Christians and if Muslims, we shall be Muslims, too. Do we come to the conclusion that the scripture we read, the gods we worship and our way of living are the best only after weighing the good and bad points in all other religions? If a Christian gives you a tract or talks about Jesus, listen to him patiently and find out if there is anything useful in what he says. After a careful consideration take a decision. After all, caste and creed are what people have created, not God.

If our children whom we have borne for ten months and brought into the world and those we have nurtured and taken care of keeping vigil during nights, do not recognize us as parents but call someone else as father and mother and lavish all their love on them, how will we feel? Won't we get angry? This is exactly what happens when we forget the Creator who gives us everything we need and choose to serve the lifeless

images of the strange gods created by some people who make a living out of it. This is what angers our God, and in His anger, He will only curse us and not bless us. The people of Israel worshipped lifeless idols and the Lord gave them warning after warning through His holy men, but they would not listen. So, He punished them and scattered them the world over and they went wailing.

Idol worship took them to captivity

Prophet Isaiah said 107 years ago (Isaiah 39:6-7—713 B.C.) and Micah the prophet said 104 years ago (Micah 4:10—710 B.C.) that the tribe of Judah would be taken captive to Babylon. Prophet Jeremiah said in Jer.25:11 (606 B.C.) precisely that they would be in captivity in Babylon for 70 years and it happened exactly as it was foretold. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded Judah in 606 B.C. He took all the gold vessels in the Temple and took the mother of King Jehoiachin of Judah, his wives, 3000 lords, 7000 men and 1000 workers captive to Babylon (II Kings 24:11-14). Again in 597, 586 and 581 B.C. he invaded Judah and plundered the city. He took away a lot of things and took many people captive. Exactly as the Lord had foretold through Jeremiah, the people of Judah were in captivity for 70 years (606-536).

Even after returning from captivity they did not learn a lesson. They did everything that God detested. They forgot God's commandments. As a result, God allowed invasions again. He made different nations rule over them. From 536-330 B.C. Judea was ruled over by Persians, from 330-165

B.C. by the descendants of the general of Alexander the Great and from 165-63 B.C. by the families of priests known as Maccabees.

In 63 A.D. the Romans captured Judea and the people were under their rule. The reign of the Romans was nothing but unmitigated evil. They drove the people out of their country and also destroyed them by killing them. In 70 A.D. a Roman general destroyed the Temple, razed it to the ground and put an end to the kingdom of Judea. Jesus Christ had said about the destruction of the Temple 37 years earlier in 33 A.D. thus: "These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down" (Luke 21:6). It happened as He had said. In 73 A.D. Masada the last fort of the Jews also fell to the Romans. Those who were inside the fort immolated themselves in the fort itself; those who were outside the fort were driven out of the nation.

God is good, merciful and gracious, no doubt. He is One who loves us more than our mother and father and keeps us as the apple of His eye. This is one side of His character. The other side depicts Him as the Almighty, the righteous One, a just Judge, the consuming fire, most holy, the One who cannot look at sin, a jealous God (Deut.6:15) and nobody can stand before His anger. If we do not heed His words, do not obey His commandments but transgress His law and His covenant (Leviticus 26:14-15), if we oppose Him (Lev.26:21), if we are not careful to walk according to all His statutes and law

and fail to listen to Him (Deut.28:15), woe to us. He will punish us seven times for the sins we have committed (Lev.26:18) and allow us to be afflicted by seven times more plagues (Lev.26:21).

We cannot imagine the pestilence and diseases He will punish us with, for it will be very severe. When we read Deuteronomy 28th chapter and Leviticus 26th chapter, we cannot but experience a chill down our spine, for we see so much of anger boiling within Him. The people of Israel disobeyed Him and were involved in idol worship and many sins which He detested. What is said in Deut.28:36,37 (1451 B.C.) was fulfilled exactly as God had spoken through Moses.

When the Roman emperors persecuted the Jews, the people had to leave their country and they were scattered in different parts of the world. Many came to India also. They took refuge in Kerala our neighbouring state. In Cochin there is a Jewish town in the place called Pattancheri. The Lord had already warned the people saying, "And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul" (Deut.28:65). See how the words of the Lord came true. They did not have rest in any of the places where they took refuge.

- The Jews were evicted from Cyprus in 115 A.D.

- They were compulsorily made Christians in 640, 721 and 873 A.D. in the East Roman Empire which had Constantinople as its capital.

- They were evicted from England in 1290 A.D.
- In 1306 A.D. they were driven out of France.
- In 1355 A.D. 12000 Jews were murdered in a city in Spain.
- In 1349-1360 A.D. the Jews were evicted from Hungary.
- The Jews were compelled to become Christians in Spain in 1146-1391 A.D.
- All the Jews in Toulouse in France were destroyed in 1420 A.D.
- They were driven away from Austria in 1421 A.D. Many were made Christians.
- 1,80,000 Jews were evicted from Spain in 1492 A.D. 50,000 were made Christians.
- In 1495 A.D. the Jews were sent away from Lutheria.
- In 1497 A.D. they were evicted from Sicily, Sardinia and Portugal.
- In 1500 A.D. all Jews in Rhodes were either made Christians or sold as slaves or driven away.
- They were sent away from Naples in 1541 A.D.
- 1,00,000 Jews were murdered in Poland in 1648-1656 A.D.
- They were forced to leave Russia in 1727-1747 A.D.
- In a certain city in Persia all the Jews were compelled to become Muslims in 1838 A.D.
- In 1882-1890 A.D. 70 lakhs Jews living in Russia were compelled to settle in the place called Pale.

- They were evicted from Moscow and Petersburg in 1891 A.D.
- There was a planned murder of the Jews in the Russian cities in 1871-1921.
- 60 lakhs Jews were burnt to death by the Nazis (by Hitler) in 1939-45 A.D.
- In 1941 A.D. the Jews were attacked in Baghdad and 180 people were killed.
- In 1949-1986 A.D. the Jews in Arab countries were tortured and also driven away.

(Source: Facts... Israel, Division of Israel, Jerusalem).

In this manner, for 1895 years from 73 A.D. to 1948 until Israel was declared a nation, the Jews were tortured, driven away and murdered in the countries where they had spread. The warning prophesied in Deut.28:64 was fulfilled to the letter. We should now understand that all the hardships and tortures which the Jews experienced will be the destiny of all idol worshippers and the people of countries steeped in idol worship and activities which God abhors.

Compassion even in anger

When the people of Israel provoked God by their actions, God was a consuming fire and a strict Father. Yet, He did not completely forsake them in His anger. Even in His anger, there was mercy and compassion. It is said in Tamil that only the hand that beats caresses and clasps. Where there is anger, there is love. Even though God's anger descended on His

people when they did all that He detested, yet, He fulfilled what He has said in Jeremiah 5:18: **"Nevertheless in those days... I will not make a complete end of you."**

God gathered all His chosen people who were scattered here, there and everywhere and made them a nation which would prove a mighty one. But, did you see how His anger boiled over? For many centuries they wandered without a place to stay in and remained slaves and in captivity, losing all they had earned, seeing with their own eyes their relatives being slain and being subjected to many tortures and great distress. For all that, the Israelites were the people God had chosen for Himself. For them He divided the Red Sea and made the waters of the river Jordan stand in a heap; He fed 25 lakh people with heavenly manna and led them by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. But, when they sinned against Him, He did not spare them, but punished them very severely.

In the personal life of an individual, in the family, in the society, in government service and in the world as a whole, what a lot of irregularities, confusion, loss, revolt, violence, terrorism, natural calamities such as earthquakes, tsunami, floods, drought, AIDS, chikungunya, swine fever, cholera, malaria, cancer and many such terminal diseases, murder, plunder, accidents, rape, loss of life because of accidents that take place every year when people go to worship in temples, failure of the monsoon, untimely rain that spoils the crops, our children being addicted to drugs right before us, the habit of smoking, watching indecent films—these are the heart-

breaking news items we read in newspapers and watch on T.V. every day. What is the reason for all those things? They are the result of our doing what the Lord abhors.

Idol worship will ruin the nation and cities

Idol worship is a sin against God. He detests it. His wrath will descend on those who indulge in it and those who encourage them to do it. It will cause untold sufferings to them, their nation and cities. How many nations have disappeared leaving no trace of their existence! Knowing all these, our wise men, elders, Siththars and religious stalwarts have strongly condemned idol worship and written against it in Uthira keethai, Mahanirvanam Skanda Sashti Kavasam gnanayogam, Nadi Sakhiyakraham, Sadhathaba vasanam and others.

We do not read them nor do we observe them. Those Siththars and wise men have spent a number of years on meditation and received heavenly wisdom which they have written in the form of songs. I have written about them in my books, 'The truth the Siththars have found' and 'Who is the true God?' Please read them.

We can understand clearly where our godliness is if we think deeply on it and closely observe our own actions. I do not say these things in order to find fault. We should think of our own actions and find out if they will be beneficial to our reaching the eternal kingdom. We forget the Creator and worship the creations. We forsake the Creator and bow before the creation. Forgetting the One who created the heaven, the

earth and the universe, we worship the sun, the moon, the stars and the nine planets.

Scientists have found out that there exist many more planets and there are a lot more stars in the galaxy. There is no use worshipping these creations of our only true God. Probably, some Prohitis get their livelihood through idol worship.

But, all this makes us superstitious with the result, we forget the Creator. It creates in us the wrong notion that only these creations (the manmade gods) make us live. We live on the earth, but, for that reason should we perform boomi ponja and worship it by addressing it, "Boomi Madha"? The water the rivers give us is essential for life, but is it wise to bow before the river Ganges calling it, "Ganga Madha"? If we do not pollute the river, that itself will be the best worship, won't it?

Livestock is very useful to us, but, should we worship the graven image of the cow and call it, "Go Madha"? Should we perform "Deepa Aaradhanai" for it? The tree gives us good fruit, shade and oxygen. It helps us to have a good rainfall and maintains a good climate. But, for that reason should we clothe the tree with a sari, put a pottu, light a lamp for the "Deepa Aaradhanai" and go round it? Does it not show our superstitious belief? We grow trees in temples and worship them. Do we ever think if it is beneficial in any way? We wrap the milestone on the road with a piece of cloth, put saffron and kumkum and offer pongal to it. In what way is it a right action? It is not my intention to wound anyone's feelings. I do not write these to degrade or find fault with the rich heritage

of Hinduism. Our Hindu heritage, civilization, decency, spiritual belief and godliness—all have a rich legacy and we should not degrade or disgrace them.

3. The capital of the Edomites was burned down

The land of Edom was a 120 mile long and 80 mile broad fertile land south east of the Dead Sea. This nation was called Idumaea by the Greeks and Romans. This was situated in the mountainous region of Seir. The capital of Edom was Selah. Amaziah the king of Judah annexed this city in 839 B.C. and renamed it Joktheel. The Greeks named this city Petra. Esau, the son of Isaac, had the name Edom, too (Genesis 25:30, 36:8). Esau married Ishmael's daughter besides two Canaanite girls and settled in Edom. He and his descendants did not follow the Lord and became idol worshippers (II Chronicles 25:14).

God prophesied through six of His prophets namely, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos and Obadiah, the punishment He was going to give to Edom, its capital and the Edomites. I give below the gist of the verses in the books of the prophets:

1. Edom will become a desolate wilderness (Joel 3:19, Ezekiel 35:3) (800 B.C., 587 B.C.).
2. No man shall abide there (Jer.49:18 - 600 B.C.).
3. They will be conquered by the Israelites and Gentiles (Ezek.25:14 - 590 B.C.).
4. There will be no trade and commerce (Ezek.35:7 - 587 B.C.).

5. There will be a lot of bloodshed (Is.34:6 – 713 B.C.).
6. The cities will be burned down and thorns will grow there (Is.34:13 – 713 B.C.).
7. Only wild animals will live there (Is.34:14,15 – 713 B.C.).
8. The nation called Edom and the people called Edomites will cease to exist (Jer.49:10 – 600 B.C.).

Fulfilment

History reveals that beginning with the reign of King Saul there were constant wars between the Israelites and the Edomites. In Deut.23:7 God commanded the Israelites not to abhor the Edimote his brother. Even if the Israelites went their own way, the Edimotes went to war with them often. When the war with Israel was over, there was peace for some time, but there came trouble to Edom from the Assyrians. After that the king of Babylon invaded Edom and won the battle.

This city was in a valley and was surrounded by steep mountains on all four sides. On the slopes of the mountains with red stones were built one over the other banks, government buildings, trade centres and houses, all of which were built of stones scooped out of the mountains. There was only one way to enter the city. It was an 8-12 feet wide, 700-800 feet high and one mile long cave. Therefore, it was easy to protect the city from its enemies. Since it was on the main road leading to Egypt, Arabia, Babylon, Assyria and Syria, it was an important city for trade and commerce.

It is only about this city it is said in Jeremiah 49:16 and Obadiah v.4, **“O you who dwell in the clefts of the rock, who hold the height of the hill! Though you make your nest as high as the eagle, I will bring you down from there says the LORD.”** In the 6th century B.C. Nabataeans—men from the east (Ezek.25:4) —invaded Edom and drove away the Edomites from Selah and occupied it. The Edomites were forced to settle in the northern region of Edom and the southern part of Judea. The Nabataeans were descendants of Ishmael. They reigned over Edom for four centuries.

According to Maccabees I in the Apocrypha, Edom was annexed by Jewish leaders named John Hyrcanus and Judas Maccabaeus in about 160 B.C. and it fell into ruins in accordance with the prophecy in Obadiah v.18: **“The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame; but the house of Esau shall be stubble; they shall kindle them and devour them, and no survivor shall remain of the house of Esau, for the LORD has spoken.”**

In 63 B.C. when the Romans besieged Jerusalem they sent 20,000 Idumaeans into the city and they plundered the city and murdered the people indiscriminately. The Romans sent Herod an Idumaeon to rule over Judea. In 70 A.D. when the Romans drove away the Jewish people from Jerusalem, the Idumaeans were also driven away. From then on, the descendants of Edom ceased to exist. The sculpture of the Romans is still found in Selah (Petra).

Mohammedans annexed the rest of Edom and razed to the ground the cities, plundered and burned down everything.

After that Edom was not inhabited and it has now become the habitation of wild animals. A historian by name Vazhini went round the ruined city and wrote saying, in his three day travel he found 30 towns in ruins and no human beings could be found walking in and out there. This is in fulfillment of the prophecy in Ezekiel 25:13 where we read, "... I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword."

Teman is, at present, the only city that is inhabited. All the cities in the north have been ruined. Dedan is the name of an ancient neighbouring nation. As the Lord had prophesied in Isaiah 34:11, 13-15, Edom has become a habitat for wild animals, and therefore, unfit for human habitation. It is said that lions, tigers, leopards and porcupines are found in the forests and those who go to Selah (Petra) see eagles, vultures, other birds of prey and owls coming out of the caves in large numbers making a loud noise when they see human beings. There are also snakes, scorpions and a very large and poisonous variety of scorpions which are found in large numbers. In the evening the howling of jackals and foxes deafens the ears of those who go there.

A Swiss historian by name Burckhardt was a courageous man who had visited many places, and he said that only when he went to see the ruined city of Selah (Petra) did he know what fear was. Even during the cold season if a stone was removed from its place, one could see two or three most poisonous scorpions coming out. Fearing the snakes and

poisonous creatures, the Arabians do not go to the ruined and uninhabited regions, it is said.

In this way, the nation of the Edomites that was once the centre of trade and noted for its prosperity ceased to exist, thereby fulfilling the prophecies exactly as they were spoken. The reason was, the Edomites practised idol worship and indulged in evil deeds which the Lord detested, and also because they went to war with the people of Israel whom the Lord loved. It is indeed noteworthy that all the prophecies about the extinction of the nation, its capital and its descendants were spoken when they were at the height of glory in their golden age! God may forgive anything but not idol worship.

4. The city of NO was razed to the ground

The city of NO was located 418 miles south of the present Cairo city. Since Amon was the god of the city, it was called by the Hebrews, "No Amon" (Nahum 3:8 – N.K.J.V.). After the Greeks conquered it (332 B.C. and later), this city was known as Thebes. Until the Pharaohs changed the city of Noph (Memphis) as their capital, NO (Luxor) was the capital of Egypt. The Hebrew slaves (the Israelites) were used for building the city. NO was built on both the banks of the river Nile.

The world's biggest temples were built in Karnak and Luxor. The western side of the river was known as the "City of the dead". The northern part was the place where many Pharaohs were buried and the southern part was the burial

ground of the queens of the Pharaohs. Only the grave of Tut-ankh-amen was not looted by bandits and it was discovered by research scholars of ancient relics. Four rooms were filled with gold, rubies and pearls.

Tut-ankh-amen's coffin was made of gold with rubies embedded in it and it weighed 2500 pounds. Lord Cornwallis a British general (later he was governor-general of India) and his officers took ten years to register the valuable treasures in the grave. Now, they are preserved in the museum in Cairo.

The total area of temples in Karnak is 200 acres. The area of the temple alone is 60 acres. On the eastern side, there are temples for the gods Amun, Montu and Mut. To join them together 500 stone images on either side with a human face and the body of a lion called the Sphinx were erected on the footpath paved with stones 76 feet wide and they decorated the temples.

God warned the capital of Egypt which was glorifying itself in idol worship through Prophet Jeremiah (46:25-26 – 607 B.C.) and Ezekiel 30:13-16 (572 B.C.). He said He would deliver all the people of the city of NO into the hands of those who sought to take their lives, into the hands of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar and into the hands of his army. After that, it would be inhabited as it was of old.

Fulfilment

According to the prophecy, Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian King conquered Egypt in 605 B.C. and 572 B.C. The people were taken captive to Babylon. The capital was

plundered. Yet, after 40 years the captives were set free. Once again they settled themselves in their country. In this way Jeremiah's prophecy was fulfilled.

But, about the same city Ezekiel said in 30:13-16 (572 B.C.), "Thus says the Lord God: I will also destroy the idols, and cause the images to cease from Noph; there shall no longer be princes from the land of Egypt; I will put fear in the land of Egypt, I will make Pathros desolate, set fire to Zoan, and execute judgments in NO. I will pour My fury on Sin, the strength of Egypt, I will cut off the multitude of NO, and set a fire in Egypt; Sin shall have great pain, NO shall be split open, and Noph shall be in distress daily."

In 671 B.C. and later also, Assyrian kings Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal (663 B.C.) invaded Egypt, burned down NO and devastated it. But, a little of it was left over. After them, Cambyzes the Persian king subdued the remaining people and destroyed them. In the meanwhile, the capital of Egypt was shifted from NO to Noph (Memphis) and NO lost its importance. It was further broken down and destroyed.

In Isaiah 30:16 it is said that the city will be divided into separate units. As declared by the Lord, in the place where NO stood, there are 8 small villages existing now. What the Lord had foretold came to pass word for word.

5. The city of Noph was ruined

That Noph was built by an Egyptian king Menes around 2900 B.C. is what Herodotus a historian has said. The city

which was called Noph (Isaiah 19:13) and Moph (Hosea 9:6) in the Hebrew language was later called Memphis. This city was situated at a distance of 10 miles from Cairo (the capital of Egypt on the west bank of the Nile and might have been the capital of North Egypt during the time of the Pharaohs. It was 6 miles long, 4 miles wide, and had a population of 5 lakhs.

This was not an ordinary city. It was the city where Abraham and Sarah sojourned (Gen.12:10). It was also the city where Joseph was sold to Potiphar and became next in command to Pharaoh (Genesis 39:2). Not only that, Moses was reared here and it was in this city that he argued with Pharaoh on behalf of the people of Israel (Exodus 7:10). On the western side of the city there is the graveyard 60 miles long and 2 miles wide which is the biggest in the world. Here, there are many graves (Pyramids) of Pharaohs. Giza the big pyramid was constructed using 23,00,000 stones each weighing 2¼ tons.

In this graveyard they had built graves for bulls and other animals also. Because the Egyptians worshipped the bull named Apis there is a grave for it, too. In a 1120 feet long underground tunnel, there are 64 graves for bulls each weighing 60 tons. With them they had buried a lot of treasures as their offering. Noph was filled with thousands of idols. A big sphinx with a human face and an animal body, seven storey-tall idol is still there. This is supposed to be the god of the city of Itta. Until Alexander the Great built the city of Alexandria, Memphis (Noph) was an important city in Egypt: Against such a city God, who hates idol worship, pronounced His judgment through His prophets as follows:

1. Noph will be devastated. It will be burned up and will have no inhabitants (Jeremiah 46:19—607 B.C.).

2. I will destroy the idols and cause the images to cease from Noph (Ezekiel 30:13 – 572 B.C.).

3. I will set fire to Egypt; Sin shall have great pain, NO shall be split open, and Noph shall be in distress daily (Ezekiel 30:16 – 572 B.C.).

Fulfilment

According to Jeremiah's words, the Egyptians were taken captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Since then Egypt's fortunes had been deteriorating. Every nation which annexed Egypt plundered Noph's treasures and devastated the city. The king of Babylon invaded Egypt in 605 B.C. and 572 B.C. Cambyses the king of Persia invaded Egypt in 525 B.C. Alexander the Great (the Greek) was victorious over Egypt in 332 B.C. Pompey the Roman Emperor invaded Egypt in 48-47 B.C. and was victorious. In the 3rd century A.D. the Muslims waged a war, converted many into Muslims and demolished thousands of idols in the city of Noph.

After that Mamalukkians invaded Egypt in 1250 A.D. Western countries, Britain in particular, won over Egypt in 1882-1922 A.D. (and even later on) and their researchers of ancient relics took away even the idols of Egypt to their country's museum. In addition to this, marauders broke the idols in graves and took away the treasures that were buried there. Above all, the broken stones of the devastated city of Noph were used for building Cairo the present capital of Egypt.

Today, in the place where Noph existed, only 20 pyramids, the idol of sphinx and the image of Pharaoh Rameses are seen. In this way, the prophetic words of judgment were fulfilled to the letter.

6. Zoan was burned down

Not only Noph (Memphis) whose people indulged in idol worship, made animals their gods and worshipped them, did God destroy, even Zoan He destroyed by burning it down. Besides, He made the counsels of Egypt's wise men, counsellors and ministers erratic by making their thinking confused. Before doing it, He informed them through His prophets. But, they did not pay heed to His words.

Because idol worship had blinded their eyes, however much wise and knowledgeable they were, even when others told them that only God could create man and man could not create God, it would not penetrate their mind. This has been happening from time immemorial. Satan who works against God will make even the most intelligent people's senses blunt so that they cannot understand the truth. Zoan is a testimony to what will happen and how much damage will be done if you forget the true God.

Zoan in Egypt was built in the Nile's delta region (in Goshen) on the eastern bank of one of the tributaries. It was built 7 years after Hebron, a Canaanite city (Numbers 13:23). Zoan existed even during Abraham's days. Therefore, it would have been built around 2000 B.C. This city was known as Avaris during the time of Egyptian kings called Hyksos.

During the days of Pharaoh Rameses II it was renovated and named Rameses. Later it was also called Tanis.

Some learned men think that Zoan might have been the capital of the Pharaohs. Because it is said in Psalm 78:12, **"Marvelous things He did in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan"**, we may say that the place where Moses spoke to Pharaoh, the place where ten plagues occurred and the place chosen for the Israelites to leave ultimately from Egypt must have been Zoan. In Zoan there seemed to have lived wise men who gave counsel to the Pharaohs. That is the reason for God speaking through Isaiah the following prophecy: **"The princes of Zoan have become fools; the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also deluded Egypt, those who are the mainstay of its tribes. V.14: "The LORD has mingled a perverse spirit in her midst; and they have caused Egypt to err in all her work, as a drunken man staggers in his vomit."**

From the fact that the Lord affirms that the princess of Zoan had become foolish, the princes of Noph were deceived and they had deluded Egypt, it is clear that God Himself had planned to make their counsels go haywire.

Fulfilment

On 14th May 1948 when Israel was proclaimed an independent nation, the surrounding nations, namely, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia which were members of the Arab League joined together and invaded Israel. A nation that was as helpless as a newborn baby had to

receive the daily exodus of the Jews returning to their own nation from various countries of the world. She had to provide the lakhs of people with food, clothing, houses, schools, colleges, hospitals and transport facilities. Moreover, she had very little army strength. The enemies were advised by the lords and intelligent people that it was the right time to obliterate from the world map the existence of Israel as a nation. Convinced, the six nations rose against Israel with great determination. If we compare the army strength of both sides, we may say the difference was like what would be between an elephant and a cat.

Then, Azzam Pasha the secretary of the Arab League thundered from Cairo, "This will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre, which will be spoken of like the Mongolian massacre and crusade." But, all the six nations' armies met with utter failure.

Once again in the years 1956, 1956 and 1967 they came against Israel with the Russian arms (900 tanks and 90,000 soldiers) and help from the Russian army. So far, they had invaded Israel five times, and every time they lost the battle. Israel retrieved Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, Golan from Syria, and the region west of Jordan river and Jerusalem from Jordan.

Since the three countries—Egypt, Syria and Jordan—not only suffered a shameful defeat, but also lost parts of their nations, the Muslim nations were extremely angry. The representatives of 14 Arab Muslim nations gathered in Khartoum in August 1967 to discuss Israel. God sent a

perverse spirit there. At the very first meeting there was a controversy about who among them was great and the meeting could not continue. The participants left with bitter feelings.

The Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem was set fire to by a foreigner in 1969. Suspecting Israel to be responsible for it, the representatives of the world's Muslim nations gathered in Morocco's capital Rabat and held discussions. There also God sent a perverse spirit. Unable to take any decision, they returned to their own countries.

Since in the 6 day war the Suez Canal came under the control of Israel, the only big income Egypt had through it stopped and Egypt's economy began to decline. On 7th June 1970 A.D. the Aswan dam across the Nile was built. But, what a pity! The prophecies in Isaiah 19:6-10, 13, 14 were fulfilled. Egypt was also involved in a war with its neighbour and a Muslim friend Libya from July 1977. Above all, Egypt signed a treaty with Israel in the face of opposition from all Muslim countries. Therefore, the other countries removed Egypt from their league.

In January 1987, the 5th Arab High Level conference of 46 member nations was held in Kuwait to discuss the problems relating to Muslim countries. God sent a perverse spirit there also. The result was, as reported in 'Dhinamani' newspaper dated 31st January 1987, without any important resolution, the conference came to an end. The attempt to bring about an understanding between Syria and Egypt also ended in failure. In this way, God frustrated all their plans.

The nation of Israel is one which God chose specially for Himself. He has chosen the people also as His own. Similarly, He sent Jesus into this world for the salvation of the people He had created. Christianity helps the people to follow the teachings of Christ and get to heaven. The few facts that are given are meant to prove what is going to happen if any one opposes Israel or its people, who are chosen of God or Christ or Christianity.

Not only did God make the counsels of the lords of Zoan go in vain, He made Egypt's efforts, actions, the wars they waged and the meetings they held, be of no avail for Egypt. Moreover, the prophecy in Ezekiel 30:14 (572 B.C.) where the Lord says, **"I will make Pathros desolate, set fire to Zoan, and execute judgments in NO"** was fulfilled when in 568 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded Egypt the second time and went as far as Aswan in the south and burned down the cities. Zoan also would have been burned down (as the Lord had already said in the verse quoted). Alexander the Great defeated Egypt in 333 B.C. and built the city Alexandria after his name. Zoan lost its importance because of it.

God spoke through Ezekiel that He would burn down Zoan but He never said that He would destroy it completely. At present, in the place where Zoan existed there is a tiny little village called Saan. Researchers of ancient devastated sites are making researches on the old city around the village. Zoan was not completely destroyed but remains as a small village after being burned down by Nebuchadnezzar. Thus, it is

proving the glory of the Holy Scripture and the fulfillment of God's prophetic words.

7. Tyre was devastated

Tyre was a harbour city in Lebanon, 22 miles south of Sidon on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. History says it existed earlier than 2750 B.C. When Joshua decided the boundaries of the eleven tribes of Israel, Tyre came within the boundary of the tribe of Asher. In 1 Chronicles 14:1 we see how king Hiram of Tyre was friendly with King David and sent him cedar trees for timber, carpenters and masons for constructing his palace and the temple.

We learn from Ezekiel 27th chapter that Tyre was a prosperous country having trade relationship with 35 cities or nations. Tyre remained in two parts. One big part was on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea and the other part was on a small island half a mile from the shore. All its trade was by the sea. Tyre became proud because of its prosperity, worshipped strange gods, committed all the sins which God abhorred and became the object of God's anger.

God prophesied the destruction of Tyre through His prophets: Joel 3:4-8 (800 B.C.), Isaiah 25:1 (715 B.C.), Ezekiel 26:3-21 (590-588 B.C.) and Zechariah 9:3-4 (487 B.C.). Please read the verses. I give in a nutshell what the prophecies are:

1. Nebuchadnezzar will destroy the city on the sea shore.
2. Other countries also will help the destruction of Tyre.
3. The city will be bare like the top of a piece of rock.

4. It will be a place for spreading fishing nets for drying.
5. Its stones and trees will be cast into the sea.
6. It will not be rebuilt.
7. Seeing what has befallen Tyre, other cities will tremble.

Fulfilment

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded the city and besieged it for 13 long years. He broke the wall of the fort with machines which were used for breaking strong walls, went into the city, plundered it, broke the buildings, and eventually, left after setting fire to it. But, within the 13 years of the siege, people left the city and settled on the island. As we read in Ezekiel 26:8, the enemies massacred many people outside the fort. The people who did not go to the island were also slaughtered (v.11 – 589-573 B.C.). Since Nebuchadnezzar did not have a navy, he could not do anything to the newly created island of Tyre. Now, see how the prophecy in Ezek.26:3 where the Lord says, **“Behold, I am against you O Tyre, and I will cause many nations to come up against you, as the sea causes its waves to come up”** is fulfilled:

- 585-573 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded Tyre.
- 525 B.C. – Cambyses the Persian king invaded it.
- 332 B.C. – Alexander the Great invaded Tyre and won the battle.
- 68 B.C. – The Romans brought it under their rule.

- 638 B.C. – The Mohammedans captured Tyre.
- 1124 A.D. – The crusaders took control of it.
- 1291 A.D. – Once again the Mohammedans captured it and completely destroyed the city on the island.

As the Lord had spoken, because of the invasions of various nations who came as “waves of the sea”, the city of Tyre was utterly devastated. Even the prophecy in Ezekiel 26:4, **“And they shall destroy the wall of Tyre and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her like the top of a rock, and v.12: “... they will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses; they will lay your stones, your timber, and your soil in the midst of the water”** was fulfilled in the following manner:

Before Nebuchadnezzar's invasion, one portion of Tyre was in Lebanon and the other part was on the island of Tyre. In 332 B.C. the Greek emperor Alexander the Great came against Tyre. But, it was not easy to capture the city that was on the island. He built a bridge by using the rubble of the destroyed fort on the shore and the broken rocks and the stones of the houses which were destroyed. Since the stones were not sufficient, he dug up even the foundations of houses and he cast into the sea all the stones, sand and timber he got. After the bridge was constructed, it became easy to capture the island of Tyre. According to historians 8000 people were killed and 30,000 were sold as slaves.

During the Roman regime a sea-wall was constructed on the southern part of the island to prevent the sea water from

coming in, and they also built a small city. But, in 1291 A.D. the Mohammedans captured the city, broke down all the buildings and also the sea-wall and devastated the city. Now, on the northern side of the island there is a small town named Xaseu where fishermen live. The rocks on the island are used as the place for drying fishing nets. In spite of the old city of Tyre that was situated on the sea shore having many springs of good water which people could use, the city was not rebuilt. This shows how exactly God's prophetic word is fulfilled.

8. The city of Nineveh was ravaged by floods and fire

At the mention of "Nineveh" we are reminded of Jonah. We read in the Bible that during the days of Jonah (562 B.C.). Nineveh was a big city which could be reached after a three-day journey. It had more than 1,20,000 inhabitants then. Because of Jonah's warning the king and the people of Nineveh covered themselves with sack cloth, sat in ashes, fasted and turned away from their evil ways. The Lord relented from the disaster He said He would bring upon them, had mercy on them and did not destroy them. This is what we read in the Book of Jonah in the Bible.

But, the city that was not destroyed then does not exist now. Until the end of the 19th century when the researchers of ancient artifacts discovered the remains of Nineveh, those who found fault with the Bible said that such a city never existed. In the 19th century Sir Henry Layard, a researcher of excavations, dug up 35-40 feet and found the remains of Nineveh. His discovery stopped those people's criticism of the Bible. 150 years after Jonah (1713 B.C.), Prophet Nahum

prophesied the destruction of Nineveh. Let us, therefore, know the history of Nineveh.

Nineveh was built by Nimrod the great grandson of Noah (Gen. 10:9-11). This city was in existence for about 200 years B.C. Later, this city became the capital of Assyria. The circumference of the city was 7 miles and surrounding it was a 150 feet wide canal of defence. There were two strong walls for the fort; the inner fort wall was 100 feet high and 50 feet wide and their watchtowers were 200 feet high, say historians. The Assyrians were great warriors. They made Nineveh a very rich country by the rich treasures they got by looting and pillaging the countries they had captured. In 650 B.C. King Ashurbanipal established a place where plates of clay with writings were kept.

The Assyrian king Tiglathpileser invaded Israel in 734 B.C. and took the Israelites captive to Assyria. In 721 B.C. Shalmaneser the Assyrian king captured Samaria and took the Israelites captive to Assyria and settled them in Halah, Habor and the cities of the Medes. He settled the Assyrians in Samaria (II Kings 17:3,6,24). In 713-5 Sennacherib the Assyrian king captured 48 cities of Judah and took 2,00,150 people captive to Assyria (II Kings 18:13).

Besides those kings, the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon, Sargon and Pul invaded Israel and carried away their valuable treasures and destroyed the country. To the Assyrian kings, especially to Ashurbanipal, it was a pleasant pastime to build hillocks using the heads of the captives. Putting out the eyes of the captives, chopping off their hands and feet and cutting

their noses was the usual punishment they gave to their captives. Therefore, there is nothing wrong in Ezekiel referring to Nineveh as the "blood city" (Ezekiel 24:9) and Nahum calling it the "bloody city" (Nahum 3:1).

Almighty God gave warnings through Prophet Nahum in Nahum 1:8 (715 B.C.), 1:10,14, 2:6,7, 3:12-13, 15 and 19 (713 B.C.) and through Prophet Zephaniah in Zeph.2:13 (630 B.C.) The following is the substance of the verses: Nineveh will be destroyed by an overflowing flood (1:8, 2:6, 3:12), fire (3:13,15), and sword (3:15). It will be destroyed while drunk (1:10), carved images will be cut off (1:14), and there is no remedy for it (3:19). Let us see how the prophecies were fulfilled.

It is said three times repeatedly and emphatically in Nahum 1:8, 2:6, and 3:12 that Nineveh will be destroyed by an overflowing flood. What the researchers of excavations have found out about the flood is that Nineveh was built on the banks of the river Tigris (which had a tributary named Goksu) and there were dams constructed across them with sluices to control the flow of water; the armies of the Medes and Babylonians broke the sluices of the already overflowing river Tigris and caused a great flood which carried away 2½ mile long rampart besides flooding the low-lying areas.

In 612 B.C. as Ashurbanipal was celebrating his victory with his warriors outside the fort, the army of the Medes launched an attack on the city and, by the time the drunken Assyrian king could gather his army to fight, the overflowing flood broke into pieces the rampart of the fort. As it is said in

Nahum 3:12, like the figs which fall when the tree is shaken, the strongholds of Nineveh fell.

The queen gathered her attendants and, beating her breast, ran into the palace. The king lost hope and took his wife, concubines and all his riches and reached the centre of his palace where he set fire to himself and reduced everything there to ashes (Nahum 3:13,15). The enemy's army destroyed whatever was left over (Nahum 3:15).

Some historians say that the armies of the Medes and the Babylonians besieged Nineveh for three months. They had painted their shields red and their garments were also red in colour. It is said in Nahum 2:3, **"The shields of his mighty men are made red, the valiant men are in scarlet"** and that prophecy was also fulfilled.

The prophecy that there is no remedy for Nineveh (Nahum 3:19) was also fulfilled. 2000 years ago Nineveh disappeared from world history and nothing is heard of the great city till now. Until Sir Henry Layard excavated this city in the 19th century, people did not believe that Nineveh existed and thought what was said in the Bible was a fable. But, what God prophesied through His prophets came true, and the destruction of idol worshippers and their cities as mentioned in Scripture also came about as surely as He had spoken it.

9. The city of Samaria became a heap of ruins

After King Solomon's reign, the nation of Israel was divided into two separate entities (931 B.C.) as Israel in the north under Jeroboam and Judah in the south under Rehoboam.

Jeroboam led Israel to idol worship. He made two golden calves and established one in Dan and the other in Bethel and made the people of Israel worship them. Baasha the king of Israel ruled the kingdom having Tirzah as the capital. After him Elah, Zimri and Omi had Tirzah as their capital (887-875 B.C.) (1 Kings 16th chapter).

Omi bought from Shemer the mountain of Samaria for two talents of silver and named it Samaria after Shemer (1 Kings 16:24) (929 B.C.). Samaria became the capital of Israel. Israel was ruled by 19 kings for about 200 years from 933 B.C. to 721 B.C. Since the 19 kings followed idol worship and made Israel commit sin, God gave them into the hands of the Assyrians. He prophesied it through Micah 1:5,6 (750 B.C.) and Hosiah 13:16 (725 B.C.). I give below a short summary of the prophecies:

1. Samaria will become a heap of ruins and the field for planting a vineyard.
2. Her stones will be poured down into the valley.
3. Her foundation will be uncovered.
4. They will fall by the sword.
5. Her carved images will be beaten to pieces.

Fulfillment

Shalmaneser the Assyrian king besieged Samaria for 3 years, captured it in 721 B.C., took 27,290 people captive and settled them in Halah and Habor on the banks of the river Gozan and also in the cities of the Medes (II Kings 18:11).

Esarhaddon the Assyrian king filled the cities of Samaria with Assyrians. In 381 B.C. Alexander the Great captured Samaria and brought it under his rule. In 120 B.C. John Hyrcanus captured Samaria after a long siege. But, King Herod rebuilt the city and he renamed it Sebaste.

When the Mohammedans besieged Samaria, they killed women and children there, and burned down the city in 1290 A.D. Later, the people who lived around the city found it fertile, rolled down the stones into the valley and planted a vineyard there. Where the city of Samaria stood, there are olive and fig trees which have grown luxuriantly there.

After 1901 A.D. researchers of ancient relics have dug up the foundations of Samaria and examined them. Only a few pillars of the buildings which Herod had built are seen to remain today as a memorial of the city. Thus, what God spoke through Prophets Micah and Hosea was fulfilled to the letter.

10. Bethel met with total destruction

We read about Bethel for the first time in the Holy Bible in Genesis 12:8 where it is said that Abraham pitched a tent between Bethel and Ai and there built an altar and worshipped the Lord. Bethel means 'the house of God'. Later, while Jacob was proceeding to his maternal uncle's home at Padan aram, he spent the night at Bethel and saw in a dream angels ascending and descending, and he said, "**This place is certainly the house of God and nothing else.**"

Bethel is one of the places Samuel went round judging Israel. In this way, Bethel was a famous city from the days of

Abraham. When Joshua captured Canaan, Bethel was burned down. Researchers of excavations have found the burnt remains of Bethel—ashes, charcoal and brick buildings which had become charred because of extreme heat.

But still, after the days of Joshua Bethel was rebuilt. After King Solomon when Israel was divided into Israel and Judah, Jeroboam kept two golden calves—one in Dan and the other in Bethel and led the people to idol worship which was detestable in the eyes of the Lord. People of the northern region (Israel) did not go to Jerusalem to worship the Lord, but went to Dan and Bethel to worship the idols set up by Jeroboam. Therefore, God pronounced the following curse through His prophets Amos and Hosea:

Amos 5:5 (787 B.C.) **“Do not seek Bethel, nor enter Gilgal, nor pass over to Beersheba; for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nothing.”** Hosea 10: (740 B.C.) **“The inhabitants of Samaria fear because of the calf of Beth Aven, for its people mourn for it and its priests shriek for it—because its glory has departed from it.”**

Bethaven is another name given contemptuously to Bethel says the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia. See how the prophecy about Bethel was fulfilled. In 721 B.C. when Shalmaneser the Assyrian king besieged Samaria and captured and devastated it, he destroyed Bethel also and carried away the two golden calves says the Hebrew tradition. Yet, the city was rebuilt and the people of Bethel were taken captive to

Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. 70 years later, they got settled in Bethel again. In the days of the Maccabees also Bethel is said to have remained as a protected city.

In 70 A.D. when the cities of the Jews were destroyed and the Jews were driven away from their nation by the Romans, Bethel was also destroyed. Now, researchers have excavated the ruins and found Bethel absolutely devastated as prophesied by Hosea and Amos. What God has said, be it a blessing or a curse, will certainly be fulfilled. God is not a man that He should lie.

11. Babylon was wiped out

We learn from Genesis 10:8-10 that Nimrod, a valiant man, who was the great grandson of Noah, ruled over Babel, Erech, Accad and Calneh in Shinar. In Hebrew the name was Babel, Babilu in the Assyrians language and Babylon in Greek. 'Babel' means 'confusion'.

In the land of Shinar, people constructed buildings using bricks instead of stones and asphalt for mortar (Gen.11:3). The people of Shinar planned to build a city and also a tower that would reach heaven, but God confounded their language so that they could not complete the construction. The people were scattered all over the face of the earth. Since the Lord confounded their language, the tower they built was called Babel (Gen.11:1-9). Now, there remains a ruined tower built by using bricks and asphalt, and researchers of excavations are examining the remains to know if they are of the same tower mentioned in the Holy Bible.

Although it is not known who built the city of Babel, Bible scholars have said that it may have been built in 2240 B.C., that is, 4254 years ago. In the 17th century B.C. from 1728 to 1686 B.C. Babylon was the capital of the kingdom during the reign of King Hammurapi. From then on, it was known as the Babylonian kingdom.

In the 6th century B.C. the glory of the city of Babylon reached its zenith. The city was built on both banks of the river Euphrates. The city of Babylon measured 56 miles in circumference and 196 square miles in total area. It was protected by a fort with a double wall on all sides. The outer wall was, on an average, 311 feet high and 87 feet wide. The top of the wall was broad enough for 11 cars to move, and over the wall there were 250 watchtowers each 100 feet high, and there were 100 brass doors in the fort. This account was given by Herodotus a Greek historian (443 B.C.) and it is corroborated by the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.

Around 1850 B.C. researchers of the ruins of ancient cities dug up the area where the city existed and found the clay tablet on which were written the Cuneiform letters and deciphered their meaning. Until then, except the Holy Bible, there was no other source of information about Babylon. In the 6th and 7th centuries B.C. the city was rebuilt and beautified by King Nebopolassar and his son Nebuchadnezzar. During the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, the terraced hanging gardens, one of the wonders of the then world, was built for his wife.

The people of Israel were taken captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C. and they remained there for 70 years till 585 B.C. Writing about Babylon, Werner Keller, a writer, says that Babylon was not only a capital and a trade centre, it was also an important place in relation to religion. It is calculated that there were 83 big temples for important gods, 55 temples for Marduk, 305 temples for worldly gods, 600 temples for gods in the sky, 180 high places for the gods Nergal and Athar and 12 high places for other gods. So, Babylon was a city filled with idols and idol worship.

Our God announced the end of this city through His prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel. The prophecies are found in Isaiah 21:9 (714 B.C.), Jeremiah 51:52 (595 B.C.) and Isaiah 46:1-2 (712 B.C.). I give below the substance in the verses mentioned above:

1. Babylon will fall 2. Its idols will be broken to pieces 3. Through all the land the wounded shall groan 4. Unable to bear the weight of the graven images, animals and men will pull them with great difficulty. Bel and Nebo were the most important of all the gods in Babylon. God will destroy them also along with the others.

The prophecy about the carved images becoming a burden to beasts and men was also fulfilled. Some of the idols of the gods weighed 10 tons each. If they were to be taken in wagons specially meant for them, it would be difficult even for 300 people to pull them. Similarly, if other images (idols) were also loaded into wagons, and animals were made to pull them,

they would groan under their weight. How true this prophecy is! This prophecy was fulfilled in the 18th century A.D. after 2500 years when those graven images were sent to the museums in America, Britain, France and other European countries. Men and animals together dragged the idols to the harbour cities from where they were sent by ships.

Furthermore, what God prophesied through His prophets Isaiah (712 B.C.) 14:22-23 and 13:17-18, and Jeremiah (595 B.C.) 51:8, 51:52, 51:43, 51:58 and 51:11 was fulfilled. I give below the substance of the verses and say how the prophecies were fulfilled:

The prophecies in a nutshell

1. Babylon will be overthrown as it happened to Sodom and Gomorrah. 2. It will not be inhabited at all and none will pass through it. 3. All those who are in Babylon shall be destroyed. 4. It will be an abode of hedgehogs and porcupines. 5. Even those who pass by Babylon will be shocked to see the plagues which have fallen upon it. 6. Babylon will be desolate and become a dry desert because of drought. 7. Babylon's huge walls will be razed to the ground and its high doorways will be burned down. 8. The Lord will stir up the Medes against Babylon. They will destroy the young men of Babylon and they will have no pity for the fruit of the womb and they will not spare children. 9. This is the vengeance of the Lord for His holy house.

When Isaiah prophesied in 712 B.C., Assyria was a strong nation and Babylon was paying a tribute to Assyria. Only up

to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and that of Belshazzar from 606-536 B.C. was Babylon prosperous and it was only when Babylon's greatness had reached a climax did the Lord predict its downfall through Jeremiah the prophet.

Just as the Lord had predicted, when Belshazzar, king of Babylon had given a feast to a thousand of his lords and was himself drunk, a hand was seen writing on the wall the words, **"Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin"**, meaning, **God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."** That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain and Darius the Mede who was about 62 years old took the kingdom (Daniel 5:1-31).

The Persians besieged Babylon. Knowing that it would be difficult to demolish the strong walls of the fort and enter the city, they dug up a big canal, diverted the water of the river Euphrates to the canal, and thereby made the river water that flowed under the wall of the fort completely dry. Now it was easy for the army of the enemies to enter the city. On 17th October 539 B.C. the armies of the Medes and Persians captured the city without much bloodshed. Then King Cyrus plundered the city. Sometime later, Alexander captured the city. After his death, his generals and their descendants continued to seize the city one after another. In the confusion the soldiers plundered the city as much as they pleased and destroyed it as well.

Ultimately, Seleucus captured Babylon and built a city by name Seleucia 40 miles north of Babylon and on the banks of the river Tigris. Since then the trade and popularity of Babylon began to decrease and the city gradually declined in its importance. A historian who lived during the days of Ceasar Augustus (27 B.C. to 14 A.D.) has written that Babylon has become a desert. Since the soil of Babylon was acidic, it was not fit for even the grass to grow, and shepherds could not graze their flocks there (Isaiah 13:20).

Due to superstition and fear, the Arabians do not pitch their tents there (Isaiah 13:20). There is a museum near the ruins of the city. Its watchman would open it in the morning, close it in the evening and go to a nearby town to stay in the night. The railway line between Ur the city of Abraham and Baghdad the capital of the present day Iraq passes along the ruins of Babylon for a distance of three miles.

Babylon was called "the golden city" (Is. 14:4). By the side of the tower named "Babylon tower", there was the statue of Bel (Marduk). It was made of gold. In the temple there was a table 400 feet long and 15 feet wide which was made of gold. The gold in both the statue and the table weighed 50,000 pounds. Besides, the 18 feet idol of the goddess Ishtar and the statues of two lions were also made of gold. Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image 60 feet high and 6 cubic feet wide, all of gold, and set it up on the plain of Dura. How much gold it would have required! Furthermore, Nebuchadnezzar covered the 130 feet (20 metre) inner wall of the temple of Marduk with pure gold (Source: National Geographical Magazine—

Dec.1978-Page 759). Babylon was indeed a city of gold! Such a hub of idols was ruined, thus proving the predictions of Isaiah 13:21 and 14:23 and Jeremiah 50:39 and 51:26 (598 B.C.) that Babylon would be the habitation of wild animals and a wilderness without any sign of human existence.

It is not possible to say with certainty how Babylon fell. It may have been destroyed by an earthquake or a sudden deluge caused by the river Euphrates, leaving no one even to write the history of its fall. The Lord has said in Jeremiah 51:8, **"Babylon has suddenly fallen and been destroyed."** In this context Saddam Hussein, the president of Iraq, tried to rebuild Babylon spending 85 crore dollars (approximately 1550 crore rupees). He said he was the heir of Nebuchadnezzar and wished to make Babylon as great a city as it was in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. But, since he invaded Kuwait and occupied it, he became the target of the anger of the world which resulted in the U.N.O. imposing economic sanction against Iraq and, as a result, the country's economy suffered a blow forcing the project to be dropped.

The city of Babylon which exists now, has only ramparts, parks, 40 restaurants and hotels which are meant to attract tourists. No residential complexes have been built. In 1981 and 1988 a 'Babylon entertainment' was organized to which many international dignitaries were invited.

In Zachariah 5:5-11 (519 B.C.) and in the Book of Daniel the Lord has said that Babylon will be established in Shinar. In Revelation 10:21, 24, however, it is said that it will be

completely devastated and this will certainly come true. As a token, Saddam Hussein was shot dead. There is constant shell fire and suicide bombing everyday which we read about in the daily newspapers.

The reason for the wrath of God is that 1383 temples and 372 high places for various gods existed in Babylon. Saddam Hussein desired to reconstruct the city as it existed before, and temples for gods Nabu, Ishtar and Ninmah were built just above the places where they had previously remained. In the name of the god Marduk the main entrance is also built there.

The utter destruction of Babylon proves that even after the clear mandate of God which says, **"You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them..."** (Exodus 20:3-5), if people do the evil deeds which God detests, they and their country will face dreadful consequences.

Part II

1. It is a sin to worship creations

Do you understand what you have been reading so far is not a figment of my imagination nor is it a concocted story? The recorded incidents are true, for they are drawn from history, and there is evidence for everything I have written. There are unshakable and undeniable proofs for them and I have given the sources from which they are drawn. Did you notice how many countries, nations, cities and people had been completely destroyed? What is the reason for nations being completely wiped out? It is only idol worship and nothing else. It is the result of people worshipping man's creations as god instead of the Creator, who has created mankind. The consequence of doing so is total annihilation.

Can man create God?

If we ignore our parents who have brought us into this world, taken great care of us, fed us and sacrificed a great deal for our well-being, and go after some strangers and pay all our attention to them and lavish all our love on them, how will our parents feel? Will they not get angry and give us up to our fate? Only God can create man. Can man create God? Has anyone seen Him and does anyone know what He looks like? No, none at all.

Is it wise to worship God in the image of animals which God Himself has created?

We use our imagination and make an idol in the form of an animal with 4 or 5 senses created by God Himself and worship

it instead of the invisible and Almighty God, who has no form or shape. Not only do we worship it, we make others also fall into line with us. We exploit people's ignorance and superstitious beliefs and make them part with their money. We make the idol have a family and portray this man-made god as having all the base human qualities such as anger, indignation, zeal, envy, pride leading to rivalry, deception, and we represent the god of our imagination as being infused with strong sexual desires. The god of our creation is the hero of the stories of our imagination and they form the central theme of our Puranas, Ithigasams and Kappiyams. What is more, we celebrate the exploits of the gods with festivals.

Here, many babies are dying without nutritious food, whereas the lifeless idols of man's creation are given pots and pots of milk anointing (abhishekam), panchamirtha anointing, rose water-sandalwood paste anointing and honey anointing. People do not stop with those expensive gifts to their gods which are mere stone images. They decorate them with gold and diamond jewellery studded with precious gems. In the name of their lifeless gods they observe some rituals such as a gracious word in the name of the god and foot puja for which they make the ignorant people pay crores of rupees. With such a huge income they and their children live in luxury. When such injustice takes place right under our omniscient God's nose, will He turn a blind eye to it? He has already warned us in I Samuel 2:30 thus: **"... for those who honour Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."** Also in II Peter 3:7, **"But the heaven and earth... are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition**

of ungodly men." The Lord vents His anger on the ungodly in Jude 14 & 15, "... Behold, the Lord comes... to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly..."

Even if you give a thousand reasons for idol worship, the Lord will not accept them

Some people give reasons for worshipping idols such as, it is done to meditate on the true God, for it is difficult for people in the lower strata of society to focus on the formless God and worship Him without a representative form. Even if you give a thousand reasons such as the one given above, God will not accept it. Though idol worship is begun with a view to helping people meditate on God with a singleness of purpose and deep concentration, in course of time, it takes them away from the true God and makes them cling to the hand-made images as if they are the real God. They perform pujas and rituals to the false gods and those religious heads who perform them make a lot of money by exploiting the ignorance of the common people.

Idol worship is not a reality but it is only a reflection like a photograph. Man thinks of idols as God Himself. His conception of God is that the one he worships lives in the holy waters of sacred places. Spiritually immature people believe that God resides in the idols made of wood and stone. But, a wiseman feels God living deep within him.

Who worships God and how does he worship him?

A practical person sees his god in the form of fire and an emotional one sees god in an idol. But, only the truly spiritual

people will say that God fills every atom of space. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has said that wisemen see God not in idols but in themselves (1967, P.41-42). Wise people feel God everywhere, yogis feel Him in their heart and those who appear to be godly feel Him in idols (Thiruvartuppa—Ooran Adigal—1978, P.341 quoted on P.3. of Dr. A. Johnson Thangaiah's 'Christian Concept of Trinity in Tamil Literature').

Now, the question is, do we all do these rituals with true godliness? Though we have been observing all these rituals, do we do them with real godliness? In spite of being very godly, the rituals do not seem to have stabilised us or established us or made us holy, nor have they changed our thoughts.

2. The holy characteristics of the true God

Our Vedas and scriptures tell us clearly what characteristics and holy nature should be found in the true God.

Appar Swamigal says, God is One who has no name or an image. He is a personification of knowledge and wisdom. It is not possible to point out what colour or of what stature He is.

God possesses eight qualities

Thiruvalluvar refers to God as One with eight qualities. Even books on Saivism have stated them and explain the qualities thus:

1. **He is self-willed:** God has no one above Him to do work and He makes others work and does work as He pleases.

2. **He is holy and has no father and mother:** He does not have a body that will yield to vanity like ours and He was not born to human parents.

3. **Sensing everything naturally:** Unlike humans, He does not need to be sensitised, for He can sense everything without external agents. What He senses, He does naturally.

4. **Sensing all absolutely:** Lives remain in one place and not everywhere. Therefore, they cannot know different things existing in different places and at different times, whereas, God fills every place and exists always. Since He manifests Himself as the same Person irrespective of time and place, He is termed as One who possesses the perfect nature. Moreover, we can sense Him completely, because He becomes one with all life.

5. **He is naturally free from physical love:** Physical love is found to exist in all life endowed with a body. Even with life without a body, desire exists like the tree embedded in a seed. The agents which reveal desire are: 'mind', 'understanding', 'arrogance', and 'will'. These are the internal agents and there are five external ones. The power to subdue them rests in the One who is free from physical love. Therefore, the expression, 'closing the doors to the five senses' refers to a nature free from physical love.

6. **Graciousness:** It is His nature to grant grace to all.

7. **Being eternal—endless:** Thiruvalluvar refers to God as One who is peerless because no one can be as changeless as He is. He cannot be changed by time or place. God is simple

and can be won over by love. He is praised as the One who is captured by love and He is the King who dwells in love. He is smaller than an atom and bigger than the universe. He is older than the old and newer than the new.

8. **He has unlimited pleasantness:** The pleasantness which living beings enjoy is an internal agent. However, it is received through external agents. But, the sources of God are not like those of living beings. That is why His pleasantness is said to be unlimited.

(P.S. Manian, 1993, P.18—as quoted by Dr. A. Johnson Thangaiah, pp.9-11).

Sachidhaanandam (Sath, chith, aanandham)

We can condense the eight qualities of God into three, namely, Sath, Chith, Aanandham. 'Sath' means, truth. Truth, according to Descartes, is something that does not stay in anything and that in which all stay. This deserves to be pondered over (A. Lakshmanan, 1970, pp.334-335).

This idea is expressed in Agathiyar Gnanam, Siththar Ilakkiya Paadal 29. The meaning of the song is given by Dr. Gnanasigamani as follows: God is Sachidhaanandhan. Sathu—the One who remains true always. Sithu—knowledge and understanding. Aanandham—joy. God is Sathu, Sithu, Aanandham. In his song, H.A.Krishna Pillai speaks of God as Sachidhanandhan possessing truth, knowledge and joy. Dr. V. Gnanasigamani says, we should bow only before this Sachidhanandha God (Agathiyar Gnanam (1981 – 230).

Godly qualities according to Sivachariyaar

The poem in Umapathy Sivachariyar's work entitled 'Sivaprakasam' makes clear the characteristics of God. The meaning is as follows: God is above everything. He has no shape or form. He has no nature, no sign. He is without a speck or dirt, He is all by Himself, never perishing. He is the knowledge of all lives' knowledge, He is unruffled, unlimited, the personification of joy, cannot be reached by perverse beings, simple to His devotees, the smallest of the small, and the biggest of the big.

The beautiful divine attributes of God according to Saivism and Vaishnavism

Sixfold nature: It is a common practice in the literature of Saivism and Vaishnavism to sing pointing to the attributes of God. In Vaishnavism, God's divine characteristics are referred to as, "the beautiful divine attributes." Christianity does not follow this practice, but later, because of the influence of the two Hindu sects, even Christian literature mentions 'the sixfold image' (Sastriar's Jebamalai 6), 'the great divine with eight attributes' (Gnana Ula 66), 'the One with ten beautiful features' (Bethlehem Kuravanji, Mangalam 4). These phrases point out God's essential qualities (Dr. P.S. Yesudason, 'The influence of Saivism and Vaishnavism on Christian Literature, 1991, P.86).

The six attributes of God mentioned are: wealth, courage, fame, holiness, wisdom and zeal (Thanjai Vedanayaga Sastriyar Jebamalai 6).

The six facets of God's nature

1. Self—He is able to do everything all by Himself.
2. Everlasting—He endures for ever and is the first of all life.
3. Formless—The formless One with five senses.
4. Goodness personified—Has all goodness that lasts for ever.
5. Omnipresent—He is present everywhere.
6. The Alpha—He alone is the beginning of all.

The One with ten features

In his Jebamalai song 6, Thanjai Vedanayaga Sastriyar has said that God has the following ten attributes: no beginning and no end, changeless, Almighty, all-knowing, having unlimited wisdom, all pervasive, truthful, holy, righteous and filled with goodness and mercy.

We have discussed so far the divine attributes of our omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent God. It is regrettable that we do not seek such a divine God. I have not chosen the details of the divine nature of God from the Bible. I have taken them from the Hindu religious Vedas, saints, Thirukkural and Siththars' songs.

First of all, search the Puranas and see if the gods we extol as gods and worship possess all the divine qualities I have mentioned. So far none has seen God Almighty. Some have felt His presence. There are others who have received God's

grace, divine gifts, talents, power, divine healing and miracles. But, no one has seen the actual Divine Being.

Do the gods our Puranas depict as gods possess those divine qualities?

Man has given many forms and names, wives and children to his gods and to some he has given two wives. Moreover, those gods are made to indulge in love affairs and low and immoral activities very much like human beings. For example, the so called god fell in love with a spirit dressed like a beautiful woman; tried to violate the chastity of the wives of yogis and was cursed; he cast away his wife; chopped off his son's head; looking at an elephant's sex act, he took the form of an elephant and gratified himself in such activities; unknowingly gave a gift to Padmasuran who tried to test its efficacy on the god himself, and being scared, he ran to seven worlds, and ultimately took refuge in his brother-in-law's safe haven. This god is also said to have danced with a number of girls at Brindavanam, had gone to the place where women bathed, climbed a tree after taking away their clothes and teased them; hid himself behind a tree, shot an arrow at Valie and killed him; not knowing that Ravanaan had carried away his wife Sita, Raman went searching for her in forests and mountains; believing the words of one who washed clothes (for others), he made his chaste wife pass through the blazing fire.

There are many more sordid stories born of the substandard imagination of the writers of Puranas. Do these extol the gods we worship?

Puranas are meant to cater for the livelihood of imposters

Honestly, I have not written these things with the idea of denigrating Hindu gods or hurting the feelings of Hindu brothers and sisters. Nor have I imagined these things and concocted those stories. I have only written what is said in our Puranas. No one can deny the fact that whatever may be the motive of whoever has written them, they certainly do not glorify the gods they worship.

Siva Wakkiaar warns people not to worship anything and everything they see as gods (The Way to Mukthi, P.312).

False swamis in the garb of spirituality

There are many false swamis, sanyasis and gurus disguised as spiritual men who deceive ignorant people, earn a lot of money and go about as millionaires. Even those elementary school teachers who could not speak a few words continuously and were earning a paltry sum as fortune-tellers are now parading themselves as spiritual gurus. Foolish and ignorant people prostrate themselves before these false gurus and all the members of their families. Today the children of the false gurus are made their spiritual heirs. With the offerings the gurus get from those they deceive, they build colleges, schools and hospitals. They exploit the people further by levying exorbitant amounts as fees. Nothing is free.

Spirituality has become a trade which leads people to earn millions by taking advantage of the ignorance of gullible people. There is no connection between the teachings and the private lives of these Sanyasis. Some of them are imprisoned

because of the crimes such as murder and rape they have committed, and there are cases filed in the court against them. There are also raids by the income tax department.

In Gnanakovai—Siththars' songs, Valmeegar Sootra Gnanam, 5,6 (p.316), Valmeegi Munivar warns us to be wary of false spiritual people who are out to exploit the ignorant common people. The same idea is echoed by Siva Wakkiyar (Ref.Mukthi Vazhi, pp.50-51).

The basic reason for all this is people's superstition

Besides criticizing false samiyars and fake spiritualists, Siva Wakkiyar also blames our superstitious beliefs for the evil. What is the use of disapproving of the social evil in strong terms? Many times our Lord has warned us through His prophets and saints. But, how many read what the great saints have written? They do not read the Vedas and Vedanthas. They read only the Puranas thinking that they are true.

3. Even our Vedas vehemently disapprove of idol worship

In the book entitled 'Veda Samaja Vinnappam' a great pundit himself has written about the way our Puranas vehemently disapprove of idol worship. Please read Agathiyar Gnanam—Dr. Gnanasigamani (pp.120-122).

The meaning of what is said in Uththara Keethai: To Brahmins God is in fire, to ascetics God is in the heart, to the mentally retarded God is in idols and to those who are level-headed God is everywhere.

In Skandapurāṇam Gnana Yoga Kaandam Naadi Sakkiyagraham it is said that fools think Sivan exists in theertham, dhaanam, thapasu, yagnam, wood and stone. But he exists within us.

It also says, yogis see Sivan within themselves and not in idols. It is for the ignorant people's absolution (of sin) that idols are made.

Sadha thaba vasanam says: to ordinary people God is in water, to slightly better-informed people God is in the sky, to fools, God is in stone and wood and yogis find God within themselves. It is written in Maha nirvanam that many images are made to accommodate the different characteristics of the weak-minded.

The holy Word of God vehemently denounces idol worship

The Holy Bible says that the Lord absolutely detests idol worship. The following verses clearly point out that it will bring the wrath of God and the resultant curse:

“You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.

“Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing” (Deut. 7:25,26).

“You shall not set up a sacred pillar, which the LORD your God hates” (Deut.16:22).

“... they will turn to other gods (idols) and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant” (Deut.31:20).

“Cursed is the one who makes a carved or molded image, an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret” (Deut.27:15).

“Do not go after other gods to serve them and worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands...” (Jeremiah 25:6).

“Those who make an image, all of them are useless, ...” (Isaiah 44:9).

“... although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. [They] changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things” (Romans 1:21,23).

It is a sin to worship the objects of man's creation. Even worshipping the sun, moon, stars and other heavenly bodies besides animals and trees which God has created is not true worship.

Idol worshippers may give several arguments in support of their actions such as, “God is present everywhere. He is in

the images (idols) also. We do not worship the graven images we have set up. To worship an unseen God, we need to have something tangible before our eyes so that we can serve God with a single-minded devotion." Even if they give a thousand such reasons, it will not be true worship and God will not accept it. **"God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands"** (Acts 17:24). God wishes to live in our hearts and not in temples built of bricks and mortar.

God, who created the world, has no form

God is invisible and He exists as Spirit. He has no form. The Holy Bible says we should worship Him in spirit and in truth. He is in big and small objects and for that reason we should not worship any objects. We should feel Him in our mind, emotions and spirit and worship Him.

In the Siththars' song book page 5, Sivawakkiyar laments thus: Without seeking God, who is light, crores of people have wasted their lives and died broken-hearted.

God, who is not created

Without worshipping the God of all creation, people worship the created objects, namely, the sun, the moon, stars, trees, plants, living creatures such as birds, animals, creeping creatures and even humans. People do not yet know that they should not bow down before them (Perinba Manimalai Viruththam song). The meaning of the song is: if you do not accept the God of light who alone can take you to heaven, but worship humans, animals, birds, vegetation, living creatures

and various objects every day, will you inherit the eternal kingdom? All these are only child's play.

Thirumoolar sings as follows:

The donkey, the ox, the pig, the snake, the lizard—these are considered god and people worship them. Is it reasonable? Similarly, worshipping the tree, the plant and the creeper will not take us to the eternal kingdom.

What does the Holy Bible say to all those mentioned so far? In Hosea 4:12 and 13 it is said, **"My people ask counsel from wooden idols, and their staff informs them. For the spirit of harlotry has caused them to stray, and they have played the harlot against their God. They offer sacrifices on mountain tops, and burn incense on the hills, under oaks, poplars and terebinths, because their shade is good. Therefore your daughters commit harlotry, and your brides commit adultery."** In Romans 1:23 it is clearly stated, **"[They] changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things."** And in Deuteronomy 5:7,8 the LORD has categorically stated, **"You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of *anything* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in water under the earth;"** And also in Deut.4:15-19 He has said, **"Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, "lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a**

carved image in the form of any figure; the likeness of male or female, "the likeness of any animal that is on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, "the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth. "And take heed lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage" — (N.K.J.V.).

In their songs, Siththars have opposed the worship of graven images. But sadly, day by day, temples and idols are increasing in numbers. While God has created us, if we make God into an idol and worship the creation of our own hands, how atrocious it is!

In Siththars' song book, Siva Wakkiyar's songs named 'Yoga Nilai' P.11, song numbers 33 and 34, it is said that temples and ponds are not outside but in our hearts.

To the One who has the heaven as His throne and the earth as His footstool, where is the need for an image? So far, no one has seen Him. Even when He spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, He appeared to him only as fire in a burning bush. God is Spirit. Therefore, Scripture says, we should worship Him in spirit and in truth. Idol worship is most abhorrent to God. See how harshly He warns His people against it: **"You shall have no other gods before Me. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is**

in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exodus 20:3 and 4).

Because of idol worship, our descendants will suffer

God says, "You shall not bow down to them nor serve them: for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me" (Exodus 20:5). See how His anger continues as far as the fourth generation. What will be our condition if we become the targets of God's anger? If the Creator Himself gets angry with us, to whom can we go for refuge? Is it right to do something that invites the wrath of God? Just ponder over it.

4. Idol worship will make us ashamed

If we read Isaiah 44:9-19, we can know how the Lord abhors idols. "Those who make an image, all of them are useless, They neither see nor know, that they may be ashamed. "Who would form a god or mold an image that profits him nothing? "Surely all his companions would be ashamed; and the workmen, they are mere men. Let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, they shall be ashamed together, "The blacksmith with the tongs works one in the coals, fashions it with hammers, and works it with the strength of his arms. Even so, he is hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water and is faint. "The craftsman stretches out his rule, he marks one out with chalk; he fashions it with a plane, he marks it out with the compass, and makes it like the figure

of a man, according to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house. "He cuts down cedar for himself, and takes the cypress and the oak; he secures it for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes it. "Then it shall be for a man to burn, for he will take some of it and warm himself; yet he kindles it and bakes bread; indeed he makes a god and worships it; he makes it a carved image, and falls down to it. "He burns half of it in the fire; with this half he eats meat; he roasts a roast, and is satisfied. He even warms *himself* and says, 'Ah! I am warm, I have seen the fire.' "And the rest of it he makes into a god, his carved image. He falls down before it, prays to it and says, 'Deliver me, for you are my god!'" . They do not know nor understand; for He has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand. "And no one considers in his heart, nor is there knowledge nor understanding to say, 'I have burned half of it in the fire, yes, I have also baked bread on its coals; I have roasted meat and eaten it, and shall I make the rest of it an abomination'" (Isaiah 44:9-19)?—N.K.J.V.

Again in Isaiah 46:5-7 it is written, To whom will you liken Me, and make Me equal and compare Me, that we should be alike? "They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver on the scales; They hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god; they prostrate themselves, yes, they worship. "They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it and set it in its place, and it stands; from its place it shall not

move. Though one cries out to it, yet it cannot answer nor save him out of his trouble."

In Jeremiah 2:26 the Lord says that they shall be ashamed because they say to a tree, "You are my father", and to a stone, "You gave birth to me" (v.27). Again, the Lord says, "For the customs of the peoples are futile; for one cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the ax, "they decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not topple. "They are upright, like the palm tree, and they cannot speak; they must be carried because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, nor can they do any good" (Jeremiah 10:3-5). In verse 14 of the same chapter the Lord denounces His people saying, "Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge; every metalsmith is put to shame by an image; for his molded image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them." (N.K.J.V.)

In this way, the Holy Bible, the Siththars, wisemen and God Himself have censured idol worship in very strong terms. In spite of all admonitions if you still believe that gods reside in idols and worship them, woe to you! I cannot say anything else.

The confusion about the incarnation of gods

In Saivite and Vaishnavite religions and also the Puranas, many gods are shown to have had incarnation. There is no

authentic historical record about their birth and death. There are diverse theories about the gods' incarnation. One set of people believe that Vishnu is the source of incarnation. Another set of people say that Siva does not have any relationship with incarnation. Sankarar, according to some, came as an incarnation of Siva although he denied the existence of God. Similarly, the Buddha who came before Christ was the incarnation of Vishnu. So goes the story.

In the portion named Narayana in Maha Bharatham, ten incarnations are indicated. In Vayu Puranam 98:17 ten incarnations are shown. In Bhagavatha Puranam the number of incarnations is listed three times. Sathvatha Samkithai points out 39 incarnations. There are variations in the number of incarnations, and they differ from Puranam to Puranam and book to book.

To eliminate Buddhism from India, Buddha was successfully linked to Vishnu as an incarnation. Similar efforts were made to make Christ as an incarnation of Vishnu but they were unsuccessful. This was published by Dr. Y.T. Bhaskaradoss M.A. (Tamil), M.A. (Econ.), M.Ed., M.Phil., Ph.DE., Certificate in Sanskrit, who has done elaborate researches on Hindu Vedas, Puranas, the birth and growth of Saivism and Vaishnavism and also learned about incarnations, Christian religion and principles. His deep study and research has brought out his book 'Incarnation and Christianity' in which he has mentioned the unsuccessful efforts to make Christ the incarnation of Vishnu.

Incarnation takes place only once

Incarnation happens only once. If a god manifests himself once and reveals himself again, it should not be taken as another incarnation. Kannan says that he is born anew every age. What Kannan says in Bhagavath Geethai cannot be taken to mean that he has several incarnations. The incarnation of Jesus took place only once. The secret coming of Jesus and His second coming to reign for a thousand years mentioned in the Bible should not be taken as a reincarnation. It should be understood that the incarnation of a god which occurs once will remain the same and he may appear differently at different times and this should not be misconstrued as many incarnations.

Christianity is the first to announce the principles of incarnation

There is no information about incarnation in Rig, Yajur, Sama and Adharvana Vedas. If we go by history, we can say with certainty that it is Christianity which introduced incarnation first to the world. It is by the influence of Christianity on Hindu religion that the tenets of incarnation and the related imaginary stories and Puranas came into existence. What is regrettable is that in course of time, many imaginary stories not validated by commonsense have been added. But, truth always prevails over falsehood!

Not only are the stories of incarnation mere stories, even the gods are not true gods but only human beings, for there is enough evidence even in the Hindu Puranas to prove that

they do not possess the divine qualities of the true God. I say this not to hurt the feelings of Hindu brothers and sisters, but to make people understand the truth about incarnation.

5. The gods that the Puranas mention are only men

Ancient poets like Avvai and Thirumoolar have written poems about the gods whom ignorant people worship without realizing that they are not, in reality, true God but only human beings. Vedanayaga Sastriyar has begun his Gnana Thatcha Nadagam, Vengala Sarpam, pp.28-30 with the words if the god who had a snake around him a real god and the one who lay on a cobra a god, and if it were so, even the snake-charmer would be considered a god. He questions the snake-charmer if the snake did any good to him and concludes the song by saying that the one who kills the cobra worships it as god.

Could a god have a wife and children? Listing all the unholy traits of the so called gods, Kongana Maharishi says that God the Creator's only work is to be merciful. He says categorically that to call one who has no divine qualities as god is ignorance and sin.

The incarnations of gods were doomed

On P.23 of his book, 'Incarnation and Christianity', Dr. Y.T. Bhaskaradoss has written very clearly how the gods met with death. Let me remind you that I am only reiterating what is already given in the Puranas.

In the Indian Puranas the exploits of Kannan and Raman are spoken of extensively. Idhikasams and Puranas like Maha

Bharatham, Arivamsam and Ramayanam speak considerably of Kannan's romance and Raman's adventures. In the books mentioned above, places such as Mathura, Gurushetram, Brindavanam, Dwaragai and the places adjacent to River Yamuna are spoken of in connection with Kannan.

In Maha Bharatham, the exploits of Kannan, his mischiefs at Aayarpadi, his romance with Gopies on the banks of the Yamuna attracted many ancient literary writers and Aalwars. But, the last days of Kannan were filled with sorrowful incidents.

The wheel army of Kannan was taken up in the sky. The horses took his chariot up in the air above the sea and they disappeared. The symbol of the palm tree on Balaraman's flag and the symbol of the eagle on Kannan's flag disappeared from the flags. Balaraman passed away. Kannan's grandson, relatives and others perished. Yadavars slew one another and died. Overwhelmed by sorrow, Kannan went to a thick forest and, feeling helpless, he sat on the ground and rested his head on his knees. A hunter by name Irus mistook Kannan for a wild beast, shot an arrow at him and, as a result, Kannan died. Raman also died by being carried away by the river waters. Sita met with her death by falling on the soil which gave birth to her.

Did you notice how the heroes of Hindu spiritual literature—those who were exalted to the position of gods—at last died like ordinary people? How can we take Kannan who was shot dead by an arrow, and Raman who was carried

away by a river to his death as gods? Does God have birth and death? Isn't it clear that they are not gods?

I have not written these to decry or criticize any one. I only place before you the historical truth. What will happen if we turn away from the true God and praise the man-made idols as gods is given clearly in Romans 1:21-32. You may judge for yourselves if the events that are happening in our nation at present are exactly as God has said in the Scripture portion or not. Also see how the words of the Lord boil up.

6. Idol worship will ruin the society

The Word of God says clearly in Romans 1:21-32, "... although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. "Professing to be wise, they became fools, "and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. "Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, "who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

"For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. "Likewise also men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful and receiving

in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

"being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are worshipers, "backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, "undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;

"who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them" (N.K.J.V.).

We know very well that homosexuality, gay marriage, murder, plunder and rape are taking place almost everyday. Above all, we have already read the verses wherein the Lord God has said that He would give them up to destruction and that He would visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children's children to the third and fourth generations.

When we read the Bible, the Hindu Vedas, the Upanishads and the songs of Siththars, we see clearly how everything in our nation is happening according to what the Lord has foretold and how the nations and cities which were in the height of glory were devastated because they practised idol worship. What has prompted me to write about the evil of the

practice rampant in our country is the desire to share the truth with my people, relatives, friends and the people of my nation whom I love. My compassion for them, my anxiety that they should be saved from the destruction towards which they are going everyday and that they should escape the anger of God that will fall upon them if they continue in the abominable practice, have all given me the burden to write this book with tears.

It is not the will of God that even one should be lost. It is not my idea either. If it were so, I would have desisted from speaking anything and remained silent with an indifferent attitude. But, my desire for the redemption of my nation from the wrath of God would not let me be quiet. For, I know that all the prophecies of God have been fulfilled word for word and will continue to do so for centuries to come.

I have already written about them in my three-part book, 'Fulfilled Prophecies'. I know from reading the Bible how transgressing the law of God and ignoring His warning will have dangerous consequences. It is because people do all that the Lord detests, there are sudden floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, pestilence, destruction, violence, murder and plunder in our nation.

The Word of God itself tells us the reason for all the evils that come upon the land. In II Chronicles 7:13, God Himself says, **"When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people,"** and makes us understand that all the natural calamities and destruction take place because of the

wrath of God. Only the hand that chastises caresses us, too. Where there is anger, there is also goodwill. It is God who created the universe and all life including us. Will the Creator Himself destroy life? He does not do it willingly.

7. What God expects us to do for the healing of our land

What God intends to do, He carries out only feeling intense pain. In the beginning of verse 14 itself, He suggests a way out of His anger against our nation. In v.14 He promises to heal our land on certain conditions. Note what He says in v.14: **"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."** This is the only way to escape hell.

God created everyone of us by His own hand and in His own image. We were born with His name which He has graciously given to us. That is why He refers to us as, **"My people"**—with a sense of ownership. **"Humble themselves"**—before the formless and invisible Creator God we should humble ourselves, kneel down, worship Him and **"pray"** with tears, **"seek My face"**—seek God's presence, His grace and mercy, and **"turn from their wicked ways"**,—if we turn from all our sinful ways, particularly, the sin of idol worship which God detests, and **"repent"**, **"then will I hear from heaven"**—He who alone is in heaven, **"will forgive their sin"**—whatever we have committed so far, He will forgive and forget, **"will heal their land"**—I will bless them

with all goodness, blessings, joy and peace. The meaning of 'healing the land' is, He will give us unity, progress and a healthy and prosperous land free from violence, terrorism, murder and plunder. He is the only One who has said, "PROVE ME."

Shall we pray to the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, rose from the dead and lives even today?

May the grace of our Lord remain with our nation and all the people living in it for ever! Amen!

I remain,

Your brother who sheds tears for the
deliverance of our country from idol
worship which God detests,

S. Thayappan

